

WELL-BEING

In 1906, the NCAA was founded to keep college athletes safe. We are working hard to protect them physically and mentally, on the field and off. Through its **Sport Science Institute**, the NCAA is working to ensure college athletes are getting the best care possible.

LEARN MORE

KEEPING HEADS HEALTHY

In May 2014, the NCAA and the U.S. Department of Defense launched a [landmark alliance](#) to enhance the safety of athletes and service members by more accurately preventing, diagnosing and treating concussions. Included is the most comprehensive clinical [study of concussion and head impact](#) ever conducted, managed by the Concussion Assessment, Research and Education (CARE) Consortium. Twenty-six participating universities are enrolling their student-athletes in the study, and the four military academies are enrolling all cadets.

Additionally, the alliance includes the [Mind Matters Challenge](#), which calls for education and research submissions from academic institutions and the private sector to help change the culture of concussion reporting and management, as well as provide best practices.

COLLABORATING ON BEST PRACTICES

The NCAA partners with leading medical organizations to promote research, education and best practices – all to make college sports as safe as they can be. These collaborations – which include multidisciplinary teams, experts in specialized fields, top medical and sports medicine organizations, and member universities – have led to the development and endorsement of key [inter-association guidelines](#) that promote the health and safety of college athletes.

[These guidelines](#) have spurred Association-wide legislative action, including the elimination of two-a-day contact practices in football ([Division I](#), [Division II](#), [Division III](#)).

KEEPING HEARTS HEALTHY

Sudden death from a heart condition remains the leading medical cause of death in college athletes. To combat this, the NCAA Sport Science Institute is [collaborating](#) with the most respected medical and sports organizations in the country to promote research, education and best practices around [cardiac health](#).

ENSURING INDEPENDENT MEDICAL CARE

Decisions about medical care for student-athletes should be made by health care providers, not coaches. That's why schools in all three divisions are subject to rules related to independent medical care. Based on the [inter-association best practices](#) developed by the NCAA's Sport Science Institute, all schools must do two things. First, they must affirm the unchallengeable autonomous authority of the primary athletics health care providers (team physicians and athletic trainers) to determine medical management as well as if it is safe and appropriate for a student-athlete to return to play. Second, they must designate one campus representative to oversee the athletics department's health care administration and delivery.

DISCOURAGING ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG ABUSE

To promote fair and safe competition for college athletes, the NCAA has administered drug testing for banned drugs since 1986. This drug testing program, along with clear policies and [effective educational programs](#), contributes to a campus environment that supports healthy choices and a positive environment for student-athletes.

MANAGING MENTAL HEALTH

The NCAA provides [resources](#) to help college athletes, coaches, athletics administrators and campus partners better understand how to address mental health concerns. The NCAA has partnered with leading organizations to develop [best practices](#) and [training modules](#) for coaches and administrators in support of student-athlete mental well-being. The goal of these resources is to encourage a culture in which reaching out for mental health care is normal and expected.

FUELING PERFORMANCE

The [healthy performance](#) of college athletes is foundational to the work of the NCAA Sport Science Institute. In addition to promoting hydration, sleep and science-driven strength and conditioning efforts via resources for athletes, coaches and administrators, [Division I](#) and [Division II](#) schools are now permitted to provide unlimited meals and snacks to fuel student-athletes on their campuses.

PREVENTING INJURIES

College athletes are typically healthy, but participation in sports brings an [unavoidable risk of injury](#). The NCAA provides [safety guidelines](#) and [playing rules](#) to minimize risks and give student-athletes the opportunity to enjoy a healthy college playing career.

HANDLING INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Sexual assault and interpersonal violence on campus are important issues that impact the well-being of students and the campus community. The NCAA is committed to supporting and working with campuses to develop collaborative [programming](#), [resources](#), [tool kits](#) and [best practices](#) to create and maintain a safe campus environment.

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